

wherein said second wall of the rigid double-shell box structure is more towards the interior of the vehicle than a fully retracted curved vehicle door window, and

wherein a surface of the first hollow facing the door window has a curved shape to substantially coincide with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 10, 13-15, 18-20, 22-24 and 26-27 are pending in the present application. Claims 12, 17, 21 and 25 have been cancelled, and Claims 10, 15, 20 and 23 have been amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 10, 12-15 and 17-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; Claims 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 23-25 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by German Patent Publication No. 195 09 282 (GP '282); Claims 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by GP '282; Claims 13, 18 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over GP '282 in view of Finch et al; and Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over GP '282 in view of Finch et al.

Regarding the rejection of Claims 10, 12-15 and 17-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, the appropriate claims have been amended in light of the comments noted in the outstanding Office Action and as shown in the marked-up copies. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 23-25 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by GP '282. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The present invention as recited in Claim 10 is directed to a component support assembly to be mounted in a vehicle door including a rigid double-shell box structure having a first wall facing the interior of the vehicle and a second wall facing an exterior of the vehicle. The second wall has at least first and second hollows separated by separating member such that the rigid double-shell box structure independently supports a plurality of vehicle door components fixedly attached to the first wall of the rigid double-shell box structure thereby forming an enclosed volume with the first hollow of the second wall. Further, Claim 10 has been amended to recite that the second wall of the rigid double-shell box structure is more towards the interior of the vehicle than a fully retracted curved vehicle door window, and a surface of the first hollow has a curved shape to substantially coincide with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window. Independent Claims 15 and 23 include similar features.

In a non-limiting example, Figure 2 illustrates the second wall 8 of the rigid double-shell box structure being more towards the interior of the vehicle than a fully retracted curved vehicle door window (see the line of movement F of the window). Further, as shown in Figure 2, a surface of the first hollow 9 facing the door window has a curved shape to substantially coincide with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window.

Thus, as described in the specification at page 7, lines 34-35, because the surface of the first hollow has a curved shape, the hollow is inherently very strong, thereby forming a stable half box structure with a structurally sound enclosed volume. That is, the shape of the enclosed volume with the first hollow of the second wall shown in Figure 2 provides a component support assembly with a basic structure so that the equipment support fulfills its function without the need for any additional reinforcement, while at the same time optimizing

the use of the space available in the door structure and that the door in its entirety can be produced at a lower cost (see page 2, lines 8-14).

Another advantage of the enclosed volume having a curved shape coinciding with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window is that the restricted space within the door is efficiently used (see page 2, lines 25-32).

The outstanding Office Action applies GP '282 as disclosing first and second hollows and the claimed enclosed volumes (i.e., when the vehicle door components 4, 9 are attached to holes within the door panel).

However, Applicant notes that when the door component 4 is attached to the first wall (see Figure 1), it does not result in an enclosed volume. Rather, as shown in Figure 1, when the component 4 is attached to the first "hollow" 31, an enclosed volume does not occur because the "hollow" 31 is a hole and thus an enclosed volume is not formed (i.e., an inside of the volume can be reached through the hole 31). In addition, when the control device 9 is placed within its corresponding portion, an enclosed volume is also not formed. That is, the control device 9 fits flat against the surface of the door, and thus an enclosed volume is not formed. Thus, the component assembly in Figure 1 of GP '282 does not have the same structure rigidity of the claimed invention.

Further, as noted above, Claims 10, 15 and 23 recite that the surface of the first hollow has a curved shape to substantially coincide with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window. As clearly shown in Figure 1 of GP '282, the surface of the first "hollow" 31 is flat and is not curved. The same is true for the second "hollow" which receives the control device 9. Therefore, the structure rigidity of the present invention is also not achieved in GP '282.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted independent Claims 10, 15 and 23 and each of the claims depending therefrom are allowable.

Claims 20 and 21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Kurihara et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Similar arguments apply to independent Claim 20 as that discussed above with respect to Claims 10 and 15. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted independent Claim 20 and each of the claims depending therefrom are also allowable.

Claims 13, 18 and 26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over GP '282 in view of Finch et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 13, 18 and 26 depend on Claims 10, 15 and 23, respectively, which as discussed above are believed to be allowable. Further, it is respectfully submitted Finch et al also do not teach or suggest the features recited in the independent claims. Therefore, it is respectfully requested this rejection also be withdrawn.

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over GP '282 in view of Finch et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 22 depends on Claim 20, which as discussed above is believed to be allowable. Further, it is respectfully submitted Finch et al also do not teach or suggest the features recited in independent Claim 20. Therefore, it is respectfully requested this rejection also be withdrawn.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

--10. (Three Times Amended) A component support assembly to be mounted in a vehicle door, comprising:

a rigid double-shell box structure having a first wall facing an interior of the vehicle and a second wall facing an exterior of the vehicle, said second wall having at least first and second hollows separated by a separating member,

wherein said rigid double-shell box structure independently supports a plurality of vehicle door components fixedly attached to said first wall of the rigid double-shell box structure thereby forming an enclosed volume with the first [volume] hollow of the second wall,

wherein said second wall of the rigid double-shell box structure is more towards the interior of the vehicle than a fully retracted curved vehicle door window, and

wherein a surface of the first hollow facing the door window has a curved shape to substantially coincide with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window.

12. (Cancelled)

15. (Three Times Amended) A vehicle door, comprising:

an outer panel configured to be mounted on a vehicle body;

a component support assembly mounted to the vehicle door including a rigid double-shell box structure having a first wall facing an interior of the vehicle and a second wall

facing an exterior of the vehicle, said second wall having at least first and second hollows separated by a separating member; and

an interior lining,

wherein said rigid double-shell box structure independently supports a plurality of vehicle door components fixedly attached to said first wall of the rigid double-shell box structure thereby forming an enclosed volume with the first [volume] hollow of the second wall,

wherein said second wall of the rigid double-shell box structure is more towards the interior of the vehicle than a fully retracted curved vehicle door window, and

wherein a surface of the first hollow facing the door window has a curved shape to substantially coincide with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window.

17. (Cancelled)

20. (Twice Amended) A door for a vehicle comprising:

a door structure including a first door wall and a second door wall and lateral door walls[, said first door wall being located at an exterior of said vehicle];

an equipment support to be mounted to the door structure; and

an interior trim lining,

wherein the equipment support includes at least one warp-resistant double-shell box structure having a first wall facing an interior of the vehicle and a second wall facing an exterior of the vehicle, said second wall having at least first and second hollows separated by a separating member,

wherein said second wall has substantially a same curvature as a fully retracted vehicle door window, [and]

wherein the double-shell box structure individually supports a plurality of devices fixedly attached to the first wall of the double-shell box structure thereby forming an enclosed volume with the first [volume] hollow of the second wall of the double-shell box structure,

wherein said second wall of the rigid double-shell box structure is more towards the interior of the vehicle than a fully retracted curved vehicle door window, and

wherein a surface of the first hollow facing the door window has a curved shape to substantially coincide with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window.

21. (Cancelled)

23. (Amended) A component support assembly to be mounted in a vehicle door, comprising:

a rigid double-shell box structure having a first wall facing an interior of the vehicle and a second wall facing an exterior of the vehicle, said second wall having at least a first hollow and having a window lifter mechanism mounted thereto,

wherein said rigid double-shell box structure independently supports a plurality of vehicle door components fixedly attached to said first wall of the rigid double-shell box structure thereby forming an enclosed volume with the first [volume] hollow of the second wall,

wherein said second wall of the rigid double-shell box structure is more towards the interior of the vehicle than a fully retracted curved vehicle door window, and

wherein a surface of the first hollow facing the door window has a curved shape to substantially coincide with a curved shape of the fully retracted door window.

25. (Canceled).--